

Application No.: 09/981,860

Docket No.: JCLA6417

REMARKS**I. Present Status of the Application**

The Office Action rejected claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hinotani et al. (US 4,920,298). The Office Action acknowledged that claims 8-11 and 13-16 are allowed over the prior art of record.

Upon entry of the amendments in this response, claims 1 and 4 are amended, and claim 2 is canceled. Hence, claims 1, 3-11 and 13-16 remain pending in the present application, with claims 1, 4 and 8 being independent claims. Claim 1 and 4 are amended for further defining the scope of the invention, which is supported by, for example, specification, in paragraphs [0046] to [0049]; and Figs. 4-11. Applicants believe that the foregoing amendments do not introduce new matter. Thus, reconsideration of those claims is respectfully requested.

II. Response to Rejections**A. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)**

The Office Action rejected claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hinotani et al. (US 4,920,298). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection as applied to the amended claims for at least the reasons set forth below.

To anticipate a claim, the prior art reference must teach each and every element of the claim. M.P.E.P. § 2131.

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The independent claims 1 and 4, as amended, provide a planar fluorescent lamp including “two electrode structures, each having a solid slat electrode and two electrode leads at two ends of the slat electrode” (emphasis added). Here, a slat is a thin narrow flat strip or board, and a solid slat, like a solid rod, is considered a particular structure without an internal cavity.

The electrode structure disclosed by Hinotani et al., however, is “recessed in cross section” and is “in the form of a channel” (column 3, lines 47-55; Figs. 8-10), and thus has an internal cavity. Apparently, a person of ordinary skill in the field of the invention would consider that Hinotani et al.’s structure is different from that of the claimed invention.

Therefore, Hinotani et al. do not anticipate the amended claims 1 and 4 since Hinotani et al. do not disclose each and every element of the claims. Consequently, Hinotani et al. do not anticipate dependent claims 3, 5-7, as a matter of law.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the grounds of rejection have been addressed and the rejection has been overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

B. Allowable subject matter

The Office Action acknowledged that claims 8-11 and 13-16 are allowed over the prior art of record.

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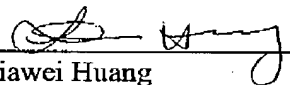
CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is believed that the pending claims are in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the examination of the above-identified patent application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

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